

approved

senior tax credit task force

Minutes of the September 26, 2007, public hearing

The Senior Tax Credit Task Force held a public hearing on August 14, 2007, in the Ellicott Room, Howard Building, 3430 Courthouse Dr., Ellicott City, MD, at 7:30 pm.

The following members of the task force were in attendance: Ted Meyerson, Janice Bloodworth, Frank Chase, Don Dunn, Colin Burke, Sue Buswell, Sara Hamer, Sue Brown, Sherman Howell, and Larry Lewis.

Others from staff in attendance were Leo Oken, Jeff Meyers, and Diana Coll.

The hearing was open to the public and press. Approximately 46 people were in the audience when the hearing began.

The chairman called the hearing to order at 7:30 p.m. The chairman explained the purpose of the task force and the purpose of the hearing. Most individuals who testified did so anonymously; however, several identified themselves: Wayne Livesay of Day Road, Gordon Bull of Kerger Road, Peter Beltram of Paulskirk Drive, Erwin Hubbard of Old Columbia Pike, Peter Owens of Bonnie View Lane, Wiliam Tydings of Route 99, and Charles Cardno of Joey Drive.

The main points of those who spoke included recommending that:

- the County credit not be linked to the State credit; this should allow for more timely processing and would better help the poorest taxpayers because the lower level of taxpayers are being under-served -- in other words, the higher one's income, the higher the state credit, thus less chance of getting a Howard County credit due to the offset;
- the income test for the credit be based on net income rather than gross income;
- applicants get acknowledgements that their applications have been received and also get regular status updates;
- the application be simplified and that fewer attachments be required;
- the letter explaining whether or not a credit was granted be rewritten as it is difficult to understand;
- the credit be made more generous;
- greater efforts be made to publicize the availability of the credit;
- seniors be exempt from paying the part of the taxes that would go to the public schools;
- the asset test should be raised.

A number of people asked questions about the law, their applications, and other related issues. Staff has promised to research the questions and provide information individually.

The meeting adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeff Meyers